The Mutilation Mystery

DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS, MORE THAN 1500 CATTLE IN 22 STATES HAVE BEEN KILLED AND MUTILATED. THEIR BLOOD DRAINED AND SELECTED ORGANS REMOVED WITH SURGICAL PRECISION. SUSPECTS RANGE FROM SATANIC CULTISTS TO GOVERNMENT RESEARCHERS.

AN EXCLUSIVE REPORT BY ED SANDERS

In the fall of 1973, there were about 40 frightening cattle mutilations in a dozen counties in north-central Kansas, most of them occurring along U.S. 81, which runs north through Kansas into Nebraska. Nebraska also had some mutilated moos.

Kansas sheriff departments, the highway patrol and the state bureau of investigation seemed baffled, as did the victimized cattle ranchers. The ranchers were used to the nocturnal depredations of predators, but they had never seen anything like the surgical precision and methodical discrimination with which these animals had been chopped up: some with their ears and tongue and, say, an eye removed; others with a swish of tail, their udders and a patch of neck flesh cut cleanly away; and nearly all of them with the anus and genitals neatly excised.

The removal of cow vulvas and bull dongs caused speculation that weirdos were involved. Suspicion fell upon one or more of the following: (1) the irresponsible shenanigans of those great scapegoats, the hippies; (2) sex deviates practicing bull-dong/cow-vulva atrocities; or (3) the rites of some religious cultists of a devil-worshiping nature.

Many authorities demurred. Dr. Harry Anthony, director of the Kansas State University veterinarian laboratory, stated in late 1973 that four out of the nine mutilated animals that the lab had examined apparently had died of a cattle disease called blackleg; the Kansas state brands commissioner declared that 99 percent of the deaths of animals that had been mutilated had been caused by natural factors. Such statements triggered a bit of outrage in law-enforcement circles in the 12 Kansas counties affected, with many officials maintaining their belief that humans were involved.

There were several bits of evidence that pointed away from predators. There was the absence of blood and footprints, for example. One cow was even found in a large mudhole, but still there were no tracks. Then, there was a peculiar absence of dangling guts and scattered hunks of flesh (predators do not read Emily Post). Also, though many animals were found in secluded areas, others were found near barns or a few feet from sleeping farmers' windows—closer to civilization than predators usually roam.

And then there were the helicopters. Helicopters without filed flight plans were sighted quite often in the afflicted counties, sometimes hovering above cattle pens. But authorities were not able to catch the choppers or to locate their landing and refueling areas. One of the early theories was that a helicopter-borne rustling operation was going on, but when it was discovered that all that was being rustled were eyeballs, genitals, milk sacs and sphincters, that theory collapsed. Then there was a rumor, apparently without foundation, that the helicopters were part of a secret military exercise out of Fort Riley, Kansas.

The situation invited off-the-wall speculation, especially as more and more strange facts became known—such as, when removing the eyes from cattle, the mutilators would take not only the eyeball but also the eyelid, membranes and all. There was to be more. Much more.

1974: YEAR OF THE MUTES

In April 1974, the mutilators were at it again in Nebraska, with the same familiar *modus operandi*: Blood was drained in some instances; there were no footprints; and various organs were removed, apparently surgically. High officials again leaned toward the predatory coyote/crow/racoon-with-a-scalpel theory. The toll of mutes, as mutilation buffs began referring to the acts, mounted throughout the summer, and by September, some 50 cases had been reported in the Cornhusker State.

As in Kansas, the rumor that the mutilations were the acts of helicopter-equipped devil worshipers, or "fertility ritualists," began to spread among the good farmers of Nebraska. Shotgun-toting vigilantes took to riding the back roads from dawn to dusk. Ranchers sometimes stopped out-of-state vehicles for a cow-blood check. Some marksperson in a pickup apparently tried to wing an aircraft that was checking a power line near Grand Island, Nebraska; as a result, the state National Guard ordered its choppers to fly at a minimum of 1000 feet rather than at the normal low of 500 feet. Sheriff Herb Thompson of hard-hit Knox County reported that, on several occasions, helicopters were seen on nights when mutilations occurred. There were also copters spotted just over the border in Iowa, where on July 15th, a Honey Creek farmer was shot at from a copter that bore no identification number.

In the fall of 1974, as the mute tapered off in Nebraska, the flying mutilation show worked its way up into South Dakota and over into Minnesota. Again, copters and boring goriness were much in evidence and the authorities chose to place the blame on predators. There was one notable exception. Dr. Mahlon W. Vorhies, associate professor of veterinarian science at South Dakota State University, said that ten animals had been examined at the school and that some of them had probably been mutilated by Homo sapiens.

In Minnesota, meanwhile, there was one case that points to a possible solution to a part of the mystery. On Friday night, October 4, 1974, a 400-pound bull was mutilated at the Charles Metz farm, in the extreme southwestern tip of the state. Both of the bull's ears were chewed/cut off and its hind end was "damaged." The local vet said that the cause of death was blackleg, a disease in the Clostridia family of bacteria. The vet added, however, that there was no sign of struggle, as is usual in cases of blackleg, nor was there much blood loss in the carcass. In fact, the animal had apparently been mutilated *after* [illegible]

Sculpture by Herb Alexander / Photography by Richard Hall

caused by disease. The copter-cruising-satanist hypothesis was so compelling, however, that no one was yet ready to entertain the theory that the bull had been *injected* with Clostridia bacteria or toxin—perhaps for experimental purposes. For indeed, how difficult it would have been for a bunch of airborne turkeys to locate a cold, dead animal in the dark! And post-death muties would have had to be ready for weird smells also, as the fumes from a rotting cow causes one to seriously consider puking as a high-priority activity.

THE UFO ANGLE

The incident that ultimately brought the UFO-sleuth nexus into the mute picture occurred in mid-December 1974, when a cow was found chopped up at the farm of Frank Schiefelbien, near Kimball, Minnesota. At the same time, there were a number of UFO sightings in the state. After a rather cursory examination of the mutilation site, a Minnesota flying-saucer buff (and avowed Sasquatch contactee) named Terry Mitchell came to the conclusion that hovering aliens had beamed a high-energy ray at the cow. There were also suspiciously broken branches, undoubtedly caused, so Mitchell's theory went, by heedless saucerite aeronautics; and then there were strange indentations in the ice on the farmer's pond—obviously gouged by UFO landing gear—and peculiar circles in the snow, which appeared in an aerial photo.

Mitchell went on to postulate that UFOlk like steak as much as most Americans—although, again, the parts of the animal taken were those seldom found in any but a weirdo's casserole. Nevertheless, Mitchell's theory created a media flap that culminated in a telephone interview on Tom Snyder's NBC *Tomorrow* show in late 1974.

It was at this point that serious saucer students decided to get into the case. Dr. J. Allen Hynek, director of the prestigious Center for UFO Studies and professor of astronomy at Northwestern University, had a friend in Minneapolis who had done some field-investigation work for the center in his leisure time. This man was Donald E. Flickinger, a special agent for the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and in January 1975, Dr. Hynek asked him to investigate the Minnesota mutilations.

Flickinger traveled to Kimball, interviewed Frank Schiefelbien and rapidly demolished the UFO hypothesis. The saucer-landing divots in the pond turned out to be watering holes chopped in the ice; the tree branches had been broken by the wind and by Schiefelbien himself; the saucer circles were actually snow-covered silage piles.

Word spread quickly among UFO researchers across the United States that the highly respected Dr. Hynek had taken an interest in the mutilations. One of those who heard the news was Jerome Clark, a UFO researcher of some reknown, who had been investigating the cattle mutilations since they first occurred in his home state of Minnesota in the spring of 1973. Clark wrote to agent Flickinger in January 1975 and related the allegations of a convict named A. Kenneth Bankston.

ENTER SATAN

During his many months of investigation, Clark had talked with Ross Doyen, a Kansas state senator who, in late 1973, had found a 500-pound heifer dead on his farm, with a six-inch hole carved in its belly. When a report of the incident was carried in Kansas newspapers, Doyen told Clark, he was contacted by Bankston, who at the time was serving a sentence for bank robbery at the Leavenworth (Kansas) Federal Penitentiary. Bankston wrote to Doyen that the mutilations were the work of a clandestine society of Satan, which had decided to expand its public viciousness.

Doyen did not place much credibility in Bankston's story, but this did not deter Clark from calling the warden at Leavenworth and obtaining permission to correspond with the inmate.

There followed an exchange of letters, in which Bankston's first missive—dated January 23, 1974—told Clark that "this cult is of Satan," that its members scarfed the animals' blood with hypodermic needles and that the animals' "sex organs are taken for ... fertility rites." Bankston alleged in subsequent letters that the same cult was also involved in some way with the bombing of the Army math lab at the University of Wisconsin in August 1970, a grim deed that left a university researcher dead. Most terrifying of all, Bankston claimed that the animal mutilations are but a prelude to what we shall here call hum-sac, or human sacrifice.

Bankston was quick to tell Clark that he wanted to help authorities round up the cultists, but he was afraid of reprisals within the prison system. He asked that Clark intervene to have him and some other possible informants removed to a jail in Minnesota where they could talk more freely.

Clark could not help Bankston and had allowed his correspondence with him to lapse by the time he contacted Flickinger in early 1975. When Flickinger met with Clark shortly thereafter and heard more details of the "cult of Satan," the seeds of a large and mysterious Federal investigation were brought to shoot [illegible] over the next few months, the cattle mutilations spread like a psychotic epidemic into 22 Western states.

THE BANKSTON SCENARIO

At Flickinger's urging, Clark wrote again to Bankston, who had been transferred to Marion Federal Penitentiary in Illinois. Bankston replied with several letters, and the horrifying allegations continued to flow. In a letter of January 31, 1975, for instance, Bankston averred that bull sex organs had been embedded in the bodies of a young runaway couple murdered somewhere in the Midwest. Bankston also continued to ask that he be transferred to a Minnesota prison, where he would be safe from inmate reprisals.

Flickinger contacted the United States District Attorney's office in Minneapolis, and the U.S. Attorney approached Federal Judge Myles Lord, a respected Minnesota liberal jurist. Judge Lord contacted the warden at Marion Penitentiary to explore the possibilities of a transfer.

When he learned of Judge Lord's interest, however, Bankston wrote to Clark and expressed sore fear at the prospect of being removed to a Minneapolis jail. He said that he feared a group of [illegible]-oriented bikers who were heavily involved in the mutilations and some of whom, he believed, had contacts within law-enforcement circles. The group was located in the Minneapolis area, and if they should get a hip to the snitching, they might harm him. What he wanted, Bankston said, was a small county jail, out of the way.

Bankston also urged that the authorities bring to Minnesota for questioning a former Leavenworth inmate-friend named Dan Dugan. Dugan, who was then serving time at LaTuna Correctional Institution in Texas, had actually, so Bankston's claim went, been a member of the satanic society and had participated in its rituals—including the dreaded hum-sac.

It appears that the most compelling reason for Judge Lord to issue an order to bring Bankston (and later Dugan) to Minnesota was the former's allegation, at one time taken very seriously by law-enforcement officials, that there was a list of prominent Americans—many of them political liberals—who were to be killed by the mutilators. Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey, a close friend of Lord's, was on the alleged list, as were the names of newscasters, members of Congress and even movie actress Kim Novak. Accordingly, on February 7, 1975, Bankston (Continued on [illegible])

THE MUTILATION MYS[illegible]RY *He said that the cult members h[illegible] talked about humah sacrifice as the next step, but he had thought they were just engaging in satanic jive and hyperbole.*

(Continued from page 52) was taken from Marion to the Dakota County Jail, in Hastings, Minnesota, by U.S. Marshals. On February 18th, agent Flickinger conducted his first interrogation; with him, as observers, were Jerome Clark and a former Army paratroop commando named Brad Ayers, active with the Center for UFO Studies.

While claiming not to have been a member of the mutilation mob himself, Bankston alleged during the interview that he had been in correspondence with diverse members of the mob around the country. He said that he had originally heard about the group from other inmates and had recorded his conversations in a notebook crammed with prison-cell gossip. He then outlined a scenario that shed light on many puzzling aspects of the mutilations.

Bankston asserted that the group used a powerful animal tranquilizer called PCP to calm the cattle. They next held amyl nitrite to an animal's nose to cause its heart to beat rapidly, then withdrew blood via a large veterinarian syringe. There were no footprints because the men walked on pieces of cardboard; in snow, they used blowtorches to melt the tracks around the animals. One reason for erasing evidence, Bankston claimed, was so that the mutilations would appear to be the work of extraterrestrials.

Bankston stated that at Leavenworth Penitentiary around 1969, he had met the treasurer of a chapter of a famous motorcycle gang and that this biker talked about earlier cattle mutilations. The biker also described his experiences in the Air Force, where he had driven a general around to inspect various missile silos, including some in Alaska. He told Bankston of an idea to seize a missile at one of the isolated sites; assuming that the missile was armed with a nuclear warhead, the bikers would then have the ultimate ransom or terror device. In 1975, oddly enough, strange flying objects did hover above Minuteman missile silos in Montana, near which there were also numerous animal mutilations; according to law-enforcement officials in the area, Malmstrom Air Force Base scrambled jet fighters to intercept the flying objects—unsuccessfully.

On March 16th, after interviewing Bankston for a month, Federal officials transferred Dan Dugan to the Dakota County Jail from the Texas prison in which he was serving a term for crimes related to auto theft. Dugan, though kept apart from Bankston, confirmed virtually everything in Bankston's scenario.

The organization the informants described was all-Caucasian; it was extremely anti-black and anti-Mexican. Its adherents, in fact, could be called Satan-necks. And what was the name of this organization? In his letters—and I have seen some 15 of them—Bankston refers to the mutilators simply as the Occult; to Flickinger, however, both Bankston and Dugan named a well-known national organization devoted to the worship of Satan.

Dugan claimed to have been recruited by the cult in Fort Worth, Texas, around 1965. He was into drugs at the time, he said, and the Devil worshipers offered him bodies of dope; other members were into chopping up small animals and using their parts in ceremonies. The man who Dugan said recruited him also happened to be a helicopter pilot and a suspected smuggler and dope dealer. Authorities in Texas later placed him under surveillance to see if he was piloting any whirlybird sallies of Satan.

Bankston and Dugan supplied a list of mutilation-mob members and many of them were found by authorities to have a background in occult practices and criminality. One woman on the list, for instance, had been arrested in 1969 for robbing graves in North Dakota. (Another allegation would, if proved, have meant that there was a Satanist mutilator with her own network TV series.) One factor that seemed to give Dugan credibility, according to a well-informed source privy to the investigation, was his obvious great fear of the Satanist society.

Dugan told agent Flickinger that he began to drift away from the Satanists when he was actually exposed to human sacrifice. He said that the cult members had talked about human sacrifice as the next step, but he had thought they were just engaging in satanic jive and hyperbole. But in 1965, Dugan claimed, he and eight other members were camped on a lake near Cozad, Nebraska, preparing for a ceremony. The group had been using PCP to tranquilize animals and now decided to try the drug out on four young campers from Kansas City. Mutilation-mob members with tranquilizer rifles then shot the four youngsters, who died two hours later, apparently from PCP overdose. Since the campers were already dead, the group decided to try out its ceremonies on the deceased, and withdrew blood and worked satanic cruelties. Afterward, Dugan claimed, the bodies were cut up and placed in burlap bags. Dugan said that he did not see what happened next, but he suspected that the bodies were interred in a nearby gravel pit.

Authorities in Cozad were informed of Dugan's story and as soon as the snows melted (it was March), police spent many long hours looking for the bodies but no skeletons were found.

During interrogation, Bankston repeated his allegation that the mutilators were involved somehow in the 1970 bombing at the University of Wisconsin. This time he named a man whom he had met in Leavenworth Penitentiary as having supplied the explosives used by the bombers. This same explosives expert, Bankston continued, was involved in a theft of plutonium in Oklahoma in late 197[illegible]. Bankston also accused an attorney in Oklahoma of having stashed the stolen plutonium in her basement. What was horrifying was the possibility that the plutonium theft was connected to the case of Karen Silkwood. Silkwood died under mysterious circumstances in November 1974, while investigating apparent safety improprieties at a plutonium-parts plant, Kerr-McGee's Cimarron Facility in Crescent, Oklahoma.

Plutonium is extremely carcinogenic and is one of the deadliest of poisons; only 4.4 pounds of it are needed to make an atomic bomb powerful enough to wipe out the downtown of a city. When Silkwood died in an automobile accident, she had with her a file of investigative documents to go over to David Burnham of *The New York Times*. The day after her death, when friends searched her wrecked car, the file was missing. Bankston's group pursued the possibility that Silkwood had inadvertently come across the mutilation mob as it ripped off plutonium for use as a domestic terror weapon.

When Federal officials checked out the attorney accused by Bankston of having the stolen plutonium, it was discovered that she was already suspected by Oklahoma authorities of having connections with a prominent member of the Italian Mafia.

All in all, the Bankston-Dugan scenario was the ultimate tale of terror. It had everything: kidnaped missile silos, mutilations in the name of Satan, plutonium terror, quarries with buried victims and even the ominous possibility of Satanic stockbrokers and gore-happy millionaires among the mute mob's 400 members.

Because some of what the informants were saying agreed with known facts, Flickinger was relieved of his regular ATF duties and assigned full time to the mutilations case, under the supervision of United States Attorney Robert Fo[illegible] Minneapolis.

What actually went on during Federal [illegible] (Continued on page [illegible])

THE MUTILATION MYSTE... *Texas had its own prime satanic suspects: a group called the Sons of Satan. In 1974, a Kilgore College student had written that this group performed dawn rituals.*

(Continued from page 92) Investigation is unclear. I have read one report, prepared by Flickinger and dated April 10, 1975, in which many other reports and investigations are mentioned. For a few months in 1975, the Federal Government apparently investigated satanic organizations and activities all over the country.

The motives of the informants also remain a bit unclear. Bankston, for instance, appears to have wanted to make a deal so that he could be transferred to a state jail in his home state of Mississippi; he also seems from his letters to have wanted to make some money from the publication of his story. Dan Dugan, the other principal informant, wanted to exchange his testimony for a reduction of his seven-year sentence.

For reasons unknown, Federal officials decided in the late spring of 1975 not to pursue the investigation further. One apparent problem with the informants' story was their allegations regarding the national leader of the mute mob. According to Bankston and Dugan, this man had served a sentence in Leavenworth on a bank-robbery conviction (which was accurate) and had recently moved to Austin, Texas (also accurate); however, when Texas reporter John Makeig obtained the alleged leader's arrest and jail history, it indicated that he had been in jail during most of the time that the informants claimed he was roaming from state to state performing hemasplurgous ceremonies.

Some authorities believe the Bankston-Dugan affair was part of a master escape plot predicated on the assumption that a small county jail is easier to flee than a big Federal prison. On May 31, Bankston did, in fact, escape from the jail in Chaska, Minnesota (to which he had been moved from Hastings), along with another prisoner; when they were apprehended six hours later, Bankston insisted that the other prisoner, a murderer, had forced him to go along with the caper. Dugan, meanwhile, had been remanded to Texas, and the day after Bankston's escape, Dugan escaped, too; he was captured on June 19th, during a holdup attempt in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Bankston later asserted that Dugan had escaped in fear for his life.

Despite the doubt cast on the satanic-ritual theory, the mutilations continued to spread and to increase in frequency in 1975. They were especially common in Texas, where Bankston was to have his fear-filled innings as well.

LONE-STAR MUTES

One stares at a map of Texas, with its 254 counties containing some 17,000,000 head of cattle—in fact, there are more cattle than people in Texas—and it is obvious that a group of moneyed mutilators could chop away pretty much to the tune of their own folly. More than 500,000 cattle reportedly die each year in Texas from natural causes, so a few hundred moos mutilated by night stealth would not be significant.

The Texas mutes reached public attention in November 1974 and then appeared to stop. More cases occurred in early 1975, with parallels to cases in other states. On January 20th, for instance, Hopkins County sheriff Paul R. Jones announced that a blood-slurping group calling itself the Devil's Disciples was believed responsible for the mutes. In Kaufman County, east of Dallas, mysterious helicopters were reported and police officers started directing their spotlights into the night sky. And Texas authorities tended to ascribe the mutes to those coyotes with table manners and stomachs big enough to hold eight gallons of moo blood—even though, as in other states, there were instances in Texas where predators had uncharacteristically avoided cattle that had been mutilated. (Usually, when a cow lies dead for a few days, the ripening fumes spread widely and predators quickly arrive by land, air and burrow for the feast.)

Also, in January, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* paid for toxicology tests on a heifer found near Brownwood, and the test showed "a significant amount of nicotine" in the liver and the blood; nicotine is the material most commonly used in tranquilizer guns. In March, a cow was chopped up north of Big Spring: its udder had been removed—but carefully, so that the stomach lining had not been punctured—and its heart had been removed through a small hole in its chest.

There were UFOs reported also. In Cochran County, following numerous flying-object reports in early March, two mutes were found in a large wheat field, each lying in a circle of burned, stubbled wheat about 30 feet in diameter. Sheriff C. G. Richards checked the circles and reported finding some radiation residue.

By late March 1975, Texas investigators had gotten word of the Federal investigation of the mute mob in Minnesota. As several of the suspected mob members—including the leader—were supposedly residing in Texas, the state department of public safety, as well as local police departments, conducted surveillance operations in Austin and in Hurst, Texas, near Fort Worth.

Texas, however, had its own prime satanic suspects in the mutilations case: a group called the Sons of Satan. In 1974, a Kilgore College student had written a paper in which he said that this group performed dawn rituals in which cattle were chopped up. The student's theme was destroyed by one or more of his teachers, who felt that the material was disgusting. But word of the paper reached T. O. Tinsley, an employee of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, who was investigating the mutilations; Tinsley located the student and traveled around Texas, talking with several of the student's sources.

"I knew of a motorcycle gang in California that also called itself the Sons of Satan; in 1970, a pack of its members murdered an Orange County woman and, according to a young man who later confessed, offered her heart to Satan by placing it in the woman's station wagon and setting the vehicle afire. The leader of the California Sons of Satan claimed to belong to a larger satanic organization that regularly sacrificed human victims in ceremonies in Northern and Southern California. One Colorado investigator believes that the Sons of Satan are involved in the mutilations and that the purpose of the mutilations is clandestine bacteriological-warfare research. I found no indication, however, that the California and Texas Sons of Satan were connected.

Between January and September 1975, John Makeig of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* wrote a series of articles on the mutilations. The articles eventually attracted the attention of mute-mob informant Bankston, who began a correspondence with Makeig, in which he repeated some of his old charges and also came up with some new ones tailor-made for Texas. There is no measuring the terror that Bankston caused in Texas that spring and summer of 1975.

In a small city south of Houston, for example, Texas Department of Public Safety agents called together the mayor, the chief of police and the city manager and announced that the town water supply was going to be poisoned by occult terrorists. In Mayflower, a small town near the Louisiana border, a sheriff's deputy called together the town's 100 citizens and announced that two of them were going to be mutilated. The result in both places was total fear-fire.

Meanwhile, learning that the Federal investigation had been called off, Makeig began to treat Bankston with more caution. When Bankston announced in a letter that the mutilators were going to

rendezvous in August at the Big Bend National Park in south Texas. Makeig contacted the park superintendent, who watched, but no gathering took place. When Bankston promised to deliver a list of mute-mob names, Makeig waited patiently for several weeks, but no list arrived.

Bankston then compounded his credibility problems by hinting that a stockbroker's daughter he had already fingered as a member of the mute-mob was about to do something possibly baleful to Makeig. Makeig took the veiled threat seriously and gave the Fort Worth police voluminous data on the mute mob. "If I get killed," Makeig told me in September 1975, "I want the police to have plenty of leads."

Around this time, Captain Keith Wolverton, a very diligent investigator from the Cascade County, Montana, sheriff's department, traveled to Marion Penitentiary to give Bankston a polygraph examination; Bankston failed on important questions. Makeig followed up by calling alleged members of the mutilation mob—including the alleged leader and the woman—and found no indication of involvement.

In early October 1975, Makeig wrote a scathing article in the *Star-Telegram* discounting most of Bankston's allegations as self-serving jailhouse bunkbabble. Bankston was finished in Texas.

WEIRDER AND WEIRDER

Even as the *Star-Telegram* article appeared, however, mutilations were discovered in ten more states, and were becoming increasingly weird; in Montana and New Mexico, for instance, wounds were found to have serrated edges. In Utah, a United States Department of Agriculture veterinarian announced that an animal he had autopsied had been injected with bacteria or a toxin; his superiors told him if he didn't shut up, he would be fired.

In Oklahoma—where there had been one mute report in 1974—citizens and officials grew alarmed over the advent of a mute plague in early 1975. Governor David Boren ordered a full investigation under the aegis of the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, which, after investigating 26 possibly mutilated animals and consulting various pathologists, theft investigators and radiation experts, issued a report dated March 3, 1975.

The report was a masterpiece of accusation. The animals had died of "natural causes." And who was chopping away at the carcasses? "It was the opinion of the task-force members that the human involvement can be attributed to individuals attempting to get in on a fad or *young people dissecting dead carcasses for biological or experimental purposes* [emphasis added]." The report also stated: "We are of the opinion that the human involvement in mutilations is a fad generated by publicity and is only temporary." A fad! You know: Hula Hoops, phone-booth packing, the twist, riots against the war, and now rectectomy and teenagers with secret dried udder sacs hidden in their closets. The report's prophecy did, in fact, come true; the mutilations virtually ceased until the fall of 1975, when mutilations occurred in the northwest part of the state.

There had been mutilations on opposite sides of Colorado in November 1974. They spread in the spring of 1975, and by the fall, animals were being carved up all over the state. Elbert County, in particular, experienced a summer and fall of terror of the sort that talk-show comedians ascribe to the streets of New York City. People were afraid to venture far abroad in country where helicopters hovered at night and anusless cattle lay stiff and mutilated in the dawn.

Despite the organized efforts of law-enforcement officials, the mutilations continued unchecked in Colorado until the first snows fell in the fall; then they came to a virtual halt. The investigators had gotten wiser over the year. They now tended to discount any involvement of blood drinkers or sex-crazed Satanists; if such weirdos were involved, the thinking went, it was only peripherally, and as a cover for the real villains in the chop-ups.

MY VERY OWN LINGUA BOVINA EXCISA

I did not want to become involved in this case. In New York, where I live, there had been several small items about the mutilations in the press in early 1975; I had added the clips to my file marked AN-SAC (animal sacrifices)—opened during my investigation of the Manson clan in 1970 and 1971—and forgotten about them. My mind had been bombarded for too many years with gore data, and I really wanted a respite from the images of violence and snuff-buffery, especially regarding the killing of cattle.

Then one morning—it was June 18, 1975—I received a phone call from the office of my literary agent. The caller said that a package forwarded to me from the publisher of my Manson book was evincing odoriferousness. Upon my urging, the wrappings were removed; inside was a box in which resided a large cow's tongue. I instantly recalled my file of mutilation clips and the fact that tongues were often missing from the animals.

My cow tongue had been postm in Sacramento, California, and the s had used Christmas stamps with robed angels on them. Aha! I tho a clue! For were not Squeaky Fr and her pal Sandy Good running a Sacramento right at that time, annou imminent gore—and were they not attired in red robes and red tennis Had *they* sent the tongue? It was a tion I was never able to answer. I could arrange to have someone a girls if they had sent the tongue. Sq had lunged at President Ford with and was in jail.

About a month after I receive tongue, however, I was in Boulder, rado, for a poetry reading and a k and I decided to drive down to County, which had been badly the 1975 mute wave. My family drove along Colorado's *Route 8* area of vast terrain and fences th for miles, broken occasionally by a entrance.

When we arrived in Kiowa, the c seat, I went to the sheriff's offic learned that a mutilation had been covered that very morning. As talking with undersheriff Bill Waug deputy Bill Orr, sheriff George Y returned from the Colorado State U ity laboratory in Fort Collins, where taken the animal—a female Short for an autopsy. Later, eight me of the sheriff's posse stopped by—n dressed men with silver-buckled bel Western shirts, who looked at frankly, as Merle Haggard's ba band. The conversation was about mutilations.

Elbert County had had its first m tions in early April 1975, and w visited in July, the number was 30; the figure was to swell to arou by fall. The county was a breeze mutilators, as there were only thre iff's officers to cover 1564 square extremely rugged land. And the t ters—no one could catch them. T cers would get close, and then th would vanish. The sheriff told me Vietnam the copter pilots had lea hug the landscape even in rugged so as to muffle their own sound.

There was an unstated attitude the sheriff and his men that, becau implications, was awful to think Somehow, in some way, the Gov is involved in the mutilations.

PASSED BY MUTILATORS

It was almost dark as we left sheriff's office and drove west [illegible]

Springs. Naturally, I was scanning the skies for flying mute squads. Suddenly I saw a light appear under the clouds. I was excited! I could see the headlines: "BEATNIK INVESTIGATOR BREAKS INTERSTATE-TERROR CASE." I looked for an entrance to the grazing range, envisioning a cross-country chase after evil Satan scientists. I stopped the car and got out to listen for the whirring of copter blades; alas, the light had disappeared, and there was nothing to do but drive onward. I was feeling a mixture of disappointment and elation—I mean, who really wants to have a rumble with airborne surgical professionals? And the ugly headlines: "BEATNIK INVESTIGATOR MAILED TO FAIENDS."

As we continued, however, we were passed by a shiny white van, which was pulling a large shiny white trailer and must have been traveling at 85 miles per hour. I tried to catch up, hoping to copy down the license number, but couldn't keep up. The trailer, I decided, was definitely large enough to carry a small helicopter, and I had just suggested to someone at the sheriff's office that maybe the mute mob was using trucks to transport copters into the vicinity of targeted cattle ranges.

Months later, I was speaking with the chief investigator at the district attorney's office in Trinidad, Colorado, Louis Girodo, about the theory that the mutilations were part of a bacteriological-warfare research project. I asked Girodo about the staging areas, or ground-support systems, that the mutilation mob would have to have in order to operate with safety and impunity.

"Well, we know they are ground supported," he replied. "We know there are maintenance people on the ground with trucks." He mentioned a rancher in Kim, Colorado, who had shot at and hit one. I then asked, "Do you have anything on big white vans pulling white trailers?"

And he replied: "Yeah, Texas plates; yeah sure do."

Girodo went on to describe an east Colorado ranch that he knew to be under heavy security—with guards, guard dogs, chained access routes, and so forth. The ranch was owned by some sort of doctor. "And," he continued, "this was one place where they had taken photos of this particular type of trailer you're talking about." Officials had flown over the armed ranch to take photos of the vehicles and the doctor had called up the local Federal Aviation Administration office to complain; when officials then asked to be allowed onto the property, the doctor refused.

"We feel that he's using those damn trailers," Girodo said. "That setup is

THE MUTILATION MYSTERY *As far as I have been able to determine, it was investigators in Colorado who first suggested that bacteriological-warfare research was behind the mutilations.*

perfect: They've got a van; they've got all the ground support in that van pulling that trailer; and the chopper is in the trailer." The chopper, the investigator continued, could be put in the air in a matter of minutes.

BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE

As far as I have been able to determine, it was investigators in Colorado who first suggested that bacteriological-warfare research was behind the mutilations—that animals were being injected with bacteria or toxins and that glands and other parts were being removed to test the effects of the agents. The mutilators, the theory went, were deliberately trying to put the blame on UFOs or satanists or predators as a cover for what was really going on. The theory has some appeal, as it makes the whole phenomenon more cogent, and it makes many things about it very understandable.

Bacteriological and chemical-warfare research, except for purely defensive purposes, has been banned in the United States since 1970. The ban grew out of an incident in Utah in March 1968, when thousands of sheep were accidentally killed by deadly VX nerve gas that apparently *floated away from the Dugway* Proving Grounds, a bacteriological-warfare research center located southwest of Salt Lake City. The Army paid local ranchers something like $376,000 in damages for 6,400 snuffed sheep.

After that little ovine indiscretion, there was tremendous pressure, particularly in Utah, to ban such research and development. President Richard Nixon himself ordered a halt to the biological and chemical programs and the destruction of existing stock piles. The order was framed in November 1969 and sent to Federal agencies in February 1970.

Not all Government agencies complied with the Presidential order, however. Senator Frank Church's Senate Select Committee on Intelligence found earlier this year that the CIA, for instance, had stored a quantity of cobra venom and enough saxitoxin (shellfish toxin) to kill hundreds of thousands of humans. Senator Church's committee also found that the CIA had socked away many canisters of toxin and/or bacteria of the Clostridia genus. One of the theories in the multistate mutilations case is that a rogue band of researchers is working with bacteria of the Clostridia genus.

There are some 93 species of Clostridia, among which are several diseases that afflict cattle; these include blackleg (*Clostridium chauvei*) and malignant edema (*Clostridium septicum*). Clostridia attack humans, also. Tetanus is caused by a Clostridia (*Clostridium tetani*) and one of the world's most potent toxins is produced by *Clostridium botulinum* (which causes botulism); according to Seymour Hersh's *Chemical and Biological Warfare—America's Hidden Arsenal*, a mere eight ounces of *botulinum* toxin could theoretically kill everybody in the world.

In virtually every state where mutilations have occurred, clostridial infections were found to be the cause of death in some cases. Two well-informed Colorado investigators told me that they felt that the cause of death was being covered up by vaguely worded laboratory reports prepared by the state government investigators; it has even been charged that the reports on the mutes have been suppressed. The well-informed investigator Giredo, for instance, told me of a female buffalo that was mutilated at a zoo in Colorado Springs on October 21, 19[illegible]. "An autopsy was performed," Giredo said, "and traces of a chemical foreign to the animal were found in its bloodstream. Boy, after that they clamped down on it. They didn't let another word out." El Paso County, Colorado, undersheriff Gary Gibbs, who coordinated much of the early mutilations investigation in the state, believes that a clamp was subsequently put on tests at the laboratories run by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation in Denver and at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

But why would an agency of the Colorado state government participate

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation officially began its investigation of the mutilations in the summer of 19[illegible] at the urging of Governor Richard D. Lamm; however, its report—which was released in November—showed that some investigation had been done as early as April 1975. The report was based on some 203 incidents of apparent mutilation; the conclusion was that 95 percent of the mutilations had been caused by predators.

This prompted a cross-state chorus of sneers and jeers from local law-enforcement officials, who must have begun to feel that the C.B.I. was stealing them like a bunch of dumduns. Moreover, of the small number of animals that the C.B.I. admitted to have been chopped up by human hand, all had first died, the report stated, from "natural causes." The implication, of course, was that ranchers had chopped the animals up in order to collect insurance money for malicious-mischief damages. Indignant ranchers noted, however, that the report was vague as to the meaning of "natural causes."

But it was nature that ultimately shot down the C.B.I.'s predator story, as reporter Dorothy Aldridge, of the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, has astutely observed. A blizzard in November 1975 left thousands of cattle dead on the range and the coyotes of the West went on instant cattle-gorge maneuvers. But, when Aldridge checked with the rendering plant at Tribune, Kansas, which processed 30,000 of the ravaged carcasses, she learned that the predators had eaten no eyeballs, ears, dongs, or other favorite treats of the mutilators. So much for the C.B.I. report.

In the fall of 1975, investigator Girodo arranged for Dr. Susan Colter, director of the Trinidad, Colorado, Animal Clinic, to conduct a field autopsy on a mutilated heifer whose carcass had been discovered less than 12 hours after death.

"Was it a healthy heifer?" I later asked Girodo.

"Definitely," he replied. "As a matter of fact, the rancher had her fattened up and ready to butcher."

Dr. Colter removed various parts of the animal, including the heart, lungs, kidneys and liver, and sent samples to a laboratory for analysis. I called up Dr. Colter to ask her if a Clostridia had been found, and she told me that, in fact, a culture of *Clostridium sordelii* had been removed from the dead animal. The inner organs of the freshly dead animal had already turned to mush—a characteristic of clostridial infection.

Girodo had also asked Dr. Colter to try to clear up one of the mutilations mysteries: that of seemingly impossible surgery whereby the animals' hearts had been removed through thoracic incisions too small for the bovine heart. There had been two such heart extractions on mutes found near Walsenburg, Colorado. "When Susan Colter did the autopsy on that one heifer," Girodo said, "I told her, 'Let's try and get that heart out of there.' I showed her the way it appeared to have been done on two other animals. And she said, 'There's no way you can do it.' She tried it, and she couldn't do it."

Was it possible, I began to wonder, that the mutilators were using razor-sharp extracting devices—similar, say, to core samplers used in geologic drilling—in order to scarf out glands or hearts or whatever else they needed for their research? That way, assuming that it's some form of toxic research, they would have been able to stand at some distance from the animal so as also to avoid selftap from germs and poisons.

CHOPPERS AND MISSILES

Colorado is a key state in the nuclear-defense apparatus of the United States. The state contains several military bases and missile installations, as well as the Air Force Academy, in Colorado Springs. One would think, then, that the military-intelligence agencies would have gotten on the stick and tried to solve a multi-state case in which helicopter-borne weirdos were creating domestic terror.

Indeed, there were alarming reports that mysterious helicopters were seen hovering above nuclear-missile installations. Sterling *Journal-Advocate* reporter Bill Jackson told me of spending long nights chasing helicopters in northern Colorado, where there are many Minuteman missile silos operated by the Air Force. The area has also experienced hot and heavy waves of mutilations. "We don't know if there's any connection with the mutilations," he told me in February 1976, "but there have been incidents here in the past month of an individual or individuals trying to break into two of the installations. And missiles at both sites, according to information that I've got, have nuclear warheads."

Jackson detailed one incident in northern Colorado late in the summer of 1975 similar to that which happened at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana that following November. One night, at about ten o'clock, Jackson and law-enforcement personnel, including someone from the Air Force, began chasing what appeared to be three different flying objects. "We chased those things until about four-thirty in the morning before they disappeared over a missile site in

southwestern Nebraska. They just flat disappeared off the radar."

"Did they land?" I asked.

"Well," Jackson replied, "we had a plane in the air that was on the site and saw the lights below; it was a clear night, and when the lights went out, everybody thought that they'd landed. But when the plane came down to 100 to 150 feet, the pilot couldn't see anything."

"What was there?" I asked.

"The only thing that was there was a missile silo," Jackson said.

Aha! I thought—the ultimate cover! Use a revamped missile site as a landing-supply zone for mute copters! There had been another incident on August 21, 1975, when an unidentified helicopter had hovered above a Strategic Air Command missile site south of Bushnell, Nebraska, then had disappeared into Colorado.

The only problem with missile installations as landing zones is their size. According to Jackson, the sites—most of which are unmanned—are enclosed with barbed-wire fence and are approximately 40' x 40'. There is a small shack on each site and then there's the sealed missile silo itself, which is about 12 feet in diameter with about a foot and a half showing above the ground. It would be difficult to hide three helicopters in such a small space, unless there was some sort of camouflaged bunker nearby. I would also guess that the electronic security is fairly intense near a nuke site, but—can it be that the United States' nuclear-security system is breaking down and that weirdos are free to perform drooling flamenco dances atop our missile-silo hatches?

RADIOACTIVITY AND GERMS

In recent months, there has been a minor media flap over alleged Soviet violations of the United Nations germ-warfare ban. Jack Anderson wrote a column in which he accused the Soviets of continuing germ-warfare research, while stating that the U.S. is keeping its promise to destroy biological weapons. "Both nations," Anderson said, "have developed new virus and Rickettsia strains against which the world has no immunity. This has been achieved by using chemicals, *radiation*, ultraviolet light and other agents to produce *freaks or mutants*" (emphasis added).

Traces of radiation were, in fact, found at several mutilation sites, one of them, already mentioned, in Cochran County, Texas. And Bill Jackson says that radiation was found at a mutilation site near Sterling, Colorado: "Two of the mutilations we had in 1975 were north of Sterling in a remote area called Chimney Canyon. There's absolutely nothing up there. The animals were mutilated on a big ranch, and just out of curiosity, the sheriff took a Geiger counter along and got a reading on both animals around the head and anus—but not on the rest of their bodies." There have been reports of radioactivity at a mutilation site in Wyoming also.

The thought that radioactive-mutant bacteria, or perhaps a bacteria radioactive-material mickey, are being slipped to animals causes the mind to go "I-yi-yi!"

THE DETECTIVE

C. C. Erianne, a private investigator in Colorado Springs who began looking into the mutilations in May 1975, takes the bacteriological-research theory very seriously. For a number of years, Erianne was an employee of one of the clandestine intelligence services; he was stationed in Europe as, he says, a specialist in Russian affairs; later, in the early Sixties, he was based for a short time in Washington, D.C., with the office of the Secretary of Defense. Erianne has assured me that he has no current connection with the Agency; in fact, he seems to have joined the ever-growing roster of patriotic-but-critical former employees of Government intelligence agencies.

Some of Erianne's Government experiences lead him to suspect that the recent mutilations are really the work of rogue researchers. In 1961, Erianne claims, he learned that secret research was being conducted by the U.S. "in regard to bacteria." He says: "There was a meeting at the Bethesda Naval Hospital in 1961. One of the people there was [Secretary of Defense Robert] McNamara. At the time, I worked for the Secretary's office, so it's pretty well substantiated that they did have a meeting in regard to some type of bacteria."

"What kind of bacteria?" I asked.

"Well, in regard to Oriental warfare," Erianne replied.

I had long heard it rumored that there had been a Government germ-warfare program that had been targeted against Orientals. It was a bit disgusting to contemplate, I must say, but let us not forget that the United States has not hesitated to use defoliants, napalm and the A-bomb against these same people. Is it unreasonable to think the United States is capable of developing a germ, or toxin, or nerve agent, that picked on the enzymes of a particular race?

According to the bacteriological-warfare theory, the group behind the mutilations consists of scientists who were fired in 1970 when the Nixon ban on bacteriological-warfare research went into effect; somehow, the story goes, these apostles of germ jive subsequently obtained clandestine funding from the Government. There has also been speculation that a private corporation stepped in to fund the research, perhaps in anticipation of the day when the Government ban would be dropped.

One of the grim possibilities is that, while once supposedly targeted against Orientals, the research may now be aimed against a different human target. One hears talk among mutilation investigators that the mucous membranes of a cow's eye possess properties similar to the mucous membranes of a particular race, and that the cow, therefore, is a perfect subject on which to test the effects of a bacteriological agent.

It all sounded to me to be a bit off the padded walls of ooo-ee-oo. In talking with reporter Bill Hendrix of KTVX-TV in Salt Lake City, however, I learned that, during the Sixties, the Dugway Proving Ground did work on an anti-Oriental germ or toxin; the stuff had been sent to Dugway—presumably from Fort Detrick or the Edgewood Arsenal (the Maryland bodies of such research—where scientists had tested it on animals.

An official at Dugway had confirmed to Hendrix that an elite group at the bacteriological-research facilities in the East had been working on such a germ weapon. They usually worked under laboratory conditions, but on two occasions, the scientists went to Texas and possibly to Minnesota, where they illegally injected range animals.

Was the anti-Oriental germ or toxin a Clostridia? Very possibly. While Clostridia is very common, it has, according to scientists, the potential for sophisticated development against specific targets.

One question comes immediately to mind: Why, instead of causing terror, don't the mutilators just rent a ranch somewhere and buy a herd of cattle and start chopping? One theory, as supplied by a Colorado newspaper editor named Dane Edwards, is that the researchers need to experiment at different altitudes, climates and seasons of the year, apparently to see if this particular strain will work in the various parts of the world where the target race dwells. I asked investigator Girodo why he thought the mutes might want to cause terror, and he replied: "Well, there are many possibilities; one is that the researchers are

trying to kick it off their own backs and get it onto that of the occult."

Another question is: Since We[illegible] ranchers are among the most patriotic of Americans, why not just hand them checks and tell them that the CIA wants a couple of their cattle—national security, you know—and to please leave the gate unlocked and to keep quiet about it?

Down in Nara Visa, New Mexico, for instance, Kathy Cammack operates a ranch with her husband in an area that has been hard-hit with mutes and copters and even UFOs. Mrs. Cammack has investigated the mutes for a local newspaper. In spite of the weirdness and terror, she wrote, "If this is Government military maneuvers, then it is time people are informed. To say that there are experiments or research in process that are classified would set many minds at ease. And, at the same time, Americans could be pleased, proud and appreciative of the endeavor. We, the people, are called on to provide tax money and to provide young men to fight in wars. Surely we can be trusted to be kept informed about things that affect us."

Apparently not. First of all, the activities of a rogue group of choppaths who defy a Presidential order could well become a hot election-year campaign issue in a country where millions distrust the Government after years of Watergate, CIA revelations, corruption, *et multa alia*.

Secondly, there is a good chance that some of these researchers, whatever their credentials, are insane. They may have some of the highest security clearances obtainable and impeccable reputations in their fields, but they're still sicties. Sometimes I think these bovine surgeons are trying for art. You look at photos of these smooth and perfect chop-up patterns—neat circles, occasionally sporting a saw-toothed edge, etc.—and you wonder if they aren't striving to produce some sort of military-industrial-surrealist soft-sculpture movement. Consider, for instance, the two-week-old calf killed near Sterling, Colorado, in early March 1976. It was small enough for the mutes to carry away the body. Only the head was left behind. They cut off the back part of the tongue and then reinserted the tip into the calf's mouth, where it was later found by the lucky person who had to poke within.

SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER

It was the summer and fall of 1975 that fully revealed the enormous scope and security precautions of the mutilators. Between September and December, the mute wave broke in 13 states and there was terror in dozens of counties throughout the West. There were plenty of [illegible] copters and UFO reports. There

THE MUTILATION MYSTERY *In Idaho, a man was driving his jeep at about 3:30 A.M. when, he claims, 15 masked people stood across the highway with locked arms and tried to stop his car.*

were few footprints. No one was caught.

There was a particularly interesting case in Apache County, Arizona, where mutilated animals were found to have mysterious softball-sized burns. I called sheriff Art Lee and asked him about this report. "There were three of them that had the burn, on the inside of the right hindquarter, about halfway up the ham," he said. "The livestock investigator out of Phoenix wrote a letter to the local newspaper here," Lee told me, "and said that these are all predator-ravaged carcasses. I answered him and I wasn't very nice about it. I told him personally are not predator-ravaged carcasses."

In Montana, the mutilations began around June 1975, and by December, the number of carcasses found was close to 100. They were definitely human caused, according to Captain Wolverton, of Cascade County. Wolverton has studied the mutilations nationwide (as mentioned earlier, he went to Marion Federal Penitentiary to give a polygraph examination to A. Kenneth Bankston), and he told me about a mutilation case that occurred in early 1975, in which the animal had been mutilated with an instrument that caves a saw-toothed cut, like that made by pinking shears. Wolverton also had a case involving burns. "We have one lab report that came in on a very fresh cow—within 23 hours of its death. We got the analysis back and it said that the edges of the lips had been serrated and burned."

The mutes began in New Mexico in August and lasted until around Thanksgiving; they started up again in early 1976. In October and November, there were mutilations in Nebraska. In Missouri, the mutes began in early October and continued in several counties into December 1975. There were about ten cases reported in Harney County, Oregon, at the end of the summer—in the region that borders Nevada in the southwestern part of the state. There were a number of mutes in Wisconsin in October 1975, one of which involved animals belonging to Richard Boom, of Eastman. "Boom thinks that the cattle . . . were killed with a gas grenade," *The Milwaukee Journal* reported on October 12th.

In Wyoming, beginning in September, there was that tedious mix of helicopters, UFOs and a lot of mutilated cattle; there was one incident in Weston County on October 6th, where an 850-pound Hereford cow was carved up and an area inside its left-rear flank apparently shaved clean. And then, to give the site that proper UFO appearance, there was a bunch of "mysterious yellow circles," about two feet in diameter, that were located from ten to 300 yards from the mute site.

In Idaho that September, a forest-service employee spotted several persons in hooded black robes walking down Cove Creek in Blaine County; the next day, several dead cattle were found, but the hooded hikers—despite an intensive search—were never found. Then, in northern Idaho on October 9th, a man was driving his jeep along U.S. 95 at about 3:30 A.M. when, he claims, 15 masked people stood across the highway with locked arms and tried to stop his car; the man got away, but the spirit of terror did not. The *Teton Valley News*, of Driggs, Idaho, for instance, responded by printing this warning last Halloween: "Parents, please be sure you know where your children are at night and especially Halloween night. On Halloween night, with the happenings in our own area, it would be advisable to have the younger children home before dark and the older ones home immediately after the football game scheduled on that night."

Idaho was hard-hit. The mutes were first discovered in June and the toll, probably, went over 100 by the time bad weather arrived in the fall. Police used the usual roadblock, radio and aircraft methods of investigation to no avail.

PRESSURE

As far as I have been able to determine, the only U.S. Government official to state publicly that a mutilated animal had been injected with a toxin or bacteria was Dr. Robert Hedelius, a veterinary medical officer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who works in Utah. Dr. Hedelius is one of a group of about 150 highly trained individuals who serve as USDA foreign-animal-disease diagnosticians—doctors who play a major part in keeping foreign-animal diseases out of the United States. Hedelius' mutilation case involved a pregnant heifer that was discovered just before dawn on September 30, 1975, two miles outside of Emery, Utah, in the middle of the state. Law-enforcement officials suspected that the mutilators had been disturbed in their work and had had to split precipitously before they were through. According to a report prepared by the Emery County sheriff's office, two "professional trackers" analyzed the dry pasture grass at the site and determined that two persons had left the scene and that they had walked along a fence for about a half mile to the road, where presumably they were picked up. Jeep posse members searched the entire area, but found no further clues.

It was strictly by chance that Hedelius happened to be in the vicinity the following afternoon. "A highway patrolman drove by and recognized my car," Hedelius told me. He went to the site where the heifer lay and performed a field autopsy; he then prepared a report of his findings for the Emery County sheriff. Reading the Hedelius report, one finds that the usual things had been done to the animal. The genitals were missing; the uterus had been cut in two and was lying on the ground next to the three-month-old fetus, which had been removed; the tip of the heifer's tail was also removed. Just an average mute.

What caused the actual death of the heifer? "It was a disease of the Clostridia family," Hedelius told me. "When I did the autopsy, it was apparent that the disease was extremely localized in the rectal area about the size of a baseball."

That night, after the autopsy, Hedelius's opinion that someone had injected a toxin or a disease into the heifer was broadcast on Salt Lake City TV. Bill Hendrix of Channel 4, interviewed Hedelius and asked the following question: "And how do you suppose this animal contracted the bacteria?" Hedelius answered: "Well, Clostridia bacteria are very common and are usually localized in one part of the infected animal. However, in this case it was extremely localized. You might say it was pin-pointed, and I believe that the bacteria were injected into the heifer."

In one of several subsequent conversations with Hedelius, I asked him about the warnings he reportedly had received from higher officials after his TV interview. "Initially," he said, "I talked to reporters; but afterward, you bet! I was muzzled, both by state and Federal people. I was told that I was not to talk to any of the news media." I then asked him about a campaign supposedly launched to discredit him. "Well, about a week after this [interview] happened, the state veterinarian of Utah appeared on television—I saw him myself—and there was a real effort made to discredit everything. He said it was the work of predators and that the mouse-inoculation test was negative. The mice that were inoculated [with bacteria taken from the heifer] still were well and happy." Hedelius explains this by saying that the Clostridia are anaerobic bacteria and

order that local law-enforcement officials may not check or search them.

live in the open air. Through either sloth or a deliberate botch-up, Hedelius' tissue samples were exposed to oxygen by others in the lab and therefore the inoculation tests were useless.)

When I talked to him, Hedelius stood firmly behind his findings. "I'm sure that whoever did this, shot the animal with a dart gun, and that he used either a culture of the bacteria or a dose of the toxin produced by the bacteria."

"Do you think," I asked, "that there's some sort of research going on?"

"Yeah, I think so. And just why it's being done is the question."

Hedelius made many salient observations relative to the case. For instance, when asked how easy it would be to obtain these bacteria or toxins, he replied: "It's very easy. There are perhaps a couple of hundred biological-supply houses in the country. . . . They could buy and propagate the culture, which produces toxins very easily." Would it take great expertise to isolate the poisons? Not really. "Actually, anybody who has had a basic course in bacteriology could do it. It's not that complicated."

On the other hand, Hedelius stressed the possibility that the whole case might be more *complex* than it appears to be. For *instance*, there was a complete lack of gas in the paunch or rumen (the first stomach) of the heifer he autopsied. He speculates that, for some reason, the mutilators may have sterilized the rumen. "Dead animals start to bloat quite rapidly after they die, especially in the hot sun; but with this animal, the first thing that impressed me was the absolute lack of bloating—and I wasn't called in on this until the late afternoon. The carcass was just about as fresh as it could be."

"How soon after death does a deceased animal start bloating?"

"Oh, just about immediately," Hedelius said. "Especially in the case of a ruminant animal, like a cow. Cows always have a certain amount of gas. But when I opened this animal up, the intestinal track and the rumen were absolutely empty and completely devoid of gas. I had never seen anything like it. Even when a cow is slaughtered at a packing plant, there's a certain amount of gas present immediately afterward. And so I can only conjecture that, with this research, perhaps there's a little more to it. Maybe they are, in fact, sterilizing the rumen, so that these gases are not produced."

It's enough to boggle the mind of a poor inquiring poet like me. Perhaps they are using the living systems of these animals as instant bacteria or toxin farms. Reading Sy Hersh's scary book on chemical and biological snuff, one encounters something the U.S. developed called mortality-enhancing factors (known, naturally, as MEFs); these agents are added to ordinary biologicals so as to greatly speed up the kill time of a disease. Perhaps the mutes are using MEFs to produce quick death, or a quick rush of production of something they want to collect. One researcher, in fact, does claim that the mutilators have got their disease death time down to 15 minutes. There are also reports that the glands that are removed from the animals, as well as the ears, eyes and tail tips, are the kinds of things that bona-fide researchers might take, in order to check the spread of chemical or biological agents.

HOW TO BREAK THE CASE

Whoever breaks this case could collect at least $26,850, which is the approximate total of rewards now being offered by various state cattle associations, governors, newspapers, etc. Private investigator Erianne has presented what seems to me to be a good approach to cracking this case, based on his long experience in the intelligence field: Analyze the mutilators' motives in order to locate them. "I think they've made mistakes all along the way," he told me. "Penetrate the mutilators' system of mistake cover-up and you're on the right road."

Erianne points out the similarity of the secrecy in this case to the secrecy around, say, the U-2 overflights. The U-2 flights could have been uncovered by investigative reporters through examination of the civilian-based supply and logistical companies; even requisition or order forms held clues as to the nature of the enterprise involved. In the mutilation case, Erianne points out, one could check helicopter-fuel delivery systems and repairs ordered for supply vehicles; one could look for unusual vans, perhaps with Federal seals affixed, which may appear to have broken down by the side of the road.

It turns out that the way that flying services transport helicopters—for oil-field work, for example—is to carry them in big vans; these vehicles have a sling-shot loading device, enabling the copters to be swung in and out of the van. Erianne points out that the Government, or a rogue unit within it, could easily move vans, helicopters and supply equipment throughout mutilation country. There is, he relates, a certain type of seal that is affixed to Government vehicles in order that local law-enforcement officials may not check or search them—even in the event of a highway accident. If there is a wreck, only Government people may examine the wreckage. Therefore, sealed Government or military equipment—railway cars or trucks—can travel in total secrecy anywhere in the United States.

Erianne is skeptical about what will occur when some mutilator is actually caught carving a Hereford in some remote county. "I think the only person who can break something like this," Erianne says, "is someone with knowledge of the affairs of a large organization and of how it produces its particular type of operations. And I don't think a deputy sheriff with a slight background in law enforcement or intelligence is going to be able to do it. If he *does* catch a guy, or two guys, the culprit's background is going to be covered as far as possible. And the victim is going to be pacified. The prosecution may be for trespassing or some misdemeanor like that."

I mentioned to Erianne, as I had to other investigators, the obvious weirdhood of the mutes—that, whatever their impeccable scientific or security credentials, they're still sick-sick-sick. "We," he responded, "we just don't know what the second or third echelon of high Government is doing."

I detect a theme. In reading Hersh's book on the chemical-warfare establishment, that theme tends to attract people—scientists and military officials—with just a touch of fanaticism. Officers and researchers in the Army's Chemical Corps are quoted as placing nerve gas right up there beside apple pie in the pantheon of patriotic symbolism. So, who knows? Assuming that the whole mute thing is not the work of sloppy outer-space Bowery bums, maybe in 1970 these super patriots waxed wroth over Nixon's betrayal and began to figure out ways to continue their activities.

Whoever they are, they're definitely operating expensively—and with a sense of urgency. Helicopter-fuel costs alone must be up there in six figures; in Utah, for instance, the rental on the copters from which coyotes and predators are shot is $125 an hour. As for urgency, the mutes may well be determined to take advantage of the apparent weakness in the Executive Branch at this time.

But there's always *hubris* waiting to destroy them. The old Greek phenomenon of *hubris*: overweening and arrogant and careless pride of conduct, which will cause the mutes to make a crucial breaking error. They'll do it, you'll see.

FBI Joins Investigation of Animal Mutilations Linked to UFOs

By WILLIAM BARNHILL, BOB PRATT and DAVID WRIGHT

The FBI has joined in the investigation of the bizarre mutilation of thousands of grazing horses and cattle over an 11-state area — attacks which have been linked to UFOs.

Disclosure of the FBI role was made at a recent conference of officials from areas where the attacks have reached an alarming level.

Sen. Harrison Schmitt (R.-N. Mex.), the ex-astronaut and scientist who organized the conference, declared: "Either we've got a UFO situation on our hands, or a massive, diabolical conspiracy which is enormously well funded."

At least 3,000 cattle and horses have been butchered with surgical precision over an estimated 1.25 million square mile area stretching from Tennessee to Oregon since the mutilations began around 1970. The 1.25 million square miles is more than a third of the total land area in the continental United States.

In many cases the attacks have coincided with UFO sightings. Baffled investigators say the strange pattern of the mutilations includes these startling facts:

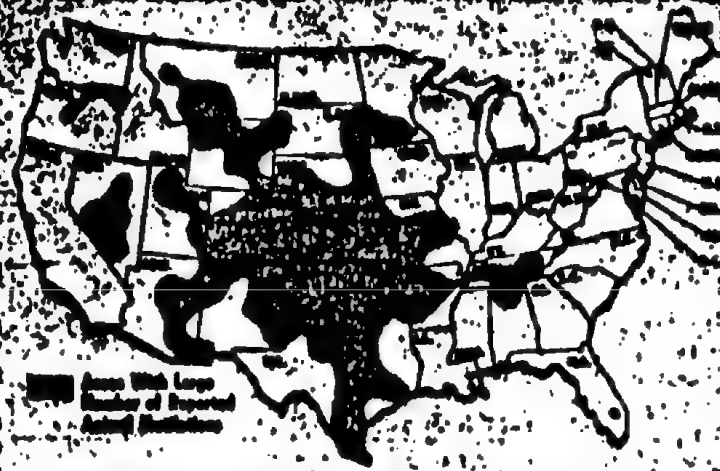
- No fingerprints, footprints or other signs of human activity are found near the mutilated carcasses.
- Only the blood and certain parts of the animals — usually the reproductive organs — are removed.
- Trace elements found on and in some carcasses are the same as those collected after a UFO sighting in New Mexico.
- Buzzards and coyotes refuse to eat the mutilated horses and cattle.

Sen. Schmitt, who received a Ph.D. in geology from Harvard University and was a member of the Apollo 17 moon-landing crew, said state and local law enforcement officials have been unable to come up with leads on their own and FBI help is needed.

"To date, the mutilations have been as mysterious as they've been grisly," he said.

"The Justice Department authorized the FBI office in Albuquerque to become involved in the investigation of these crimes on the basis that several of the mutilation killings occurred on Indian lands."

Many attacks have occurred on animals at the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in Dulce, N. Mex.



Areas With Large Number of Reported Animal Mutilations

BAFFLING incidents have occurred in 11 states.

EXPERTS: New Mexico state trooper Gabe Valdez takes tissue samples from a mutilated cow found at Dulce, N. Mex. Assisting him is retired scientist Howard Burgess, who's investigated several similar incidents with Valdez.

A state trooper who has investigated more than 30 attacks.

If predators are involved, he said, "we have some predators with super powers. We find these carcasses are being lifted up (off the ground) and later they leave clamp marks on the legs. It is also very hard for me to believe that a predator can take the heart out of an animal through a small wound in the neck."

Dr. Henry Monteith, an engineering physicist at Sandia Laboratories which handles secret government projects, revealed that Indians are so terrified by the mutilations, they bury the carcasses immediately and are reluctant to discuss what happened. Even their dogs refuse to go near the carcasses.

Dr. Monteith, who has been investigating the attacks since animals and take them back to the spaceship.

"There have been thousands of these mutilations nobody knows about. The Indians are usually frightened to death," he said.

"They don't say anything about it because they know it's being done by 'star people,' they know why they're doing it, so therefore we should leave it alone.

"Those are their exact words . . . The 'star people' know what they're doing and should be trusted."

Dr. Monteith said he has no doubt that aliens from outer space are responsible for the attacks and are using the animals' bodies as part of their study of life on earth.

Many other investigators — police, scientists and UFO researchers — agree that UFOs are the only possible explanation.

Said Richard Sigismund, a Boulder, Colo., psychologist and UFO researcher: "What few clues we have concerning those responsible for the mutilations suggest that we are dealing with well-equipped, highly capable airborne entities . . . We are forced, I feel, to the hypothesis that unidentified aircraft are the means — UFOs."

To aid in solving the mystery, District Attorney Eloy Martinez of Espanola, N. Mex., is seeking a $40,000 grant from the U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Admitting UFOs are a possibility, he said:

"I might be the first district attorney in the country to prosecute an alien from outer space."

estimated 1.28 million square mile area stretching from Tennessee to Oregon since the mutilations began around 1970. The 1.28 million square miles is more than a third of the total land area in the continental United States.

In many cases the attacks have coincided with UFO sightings. Baffled investigators say the strange pattern of the mutilations includes disquieting facts:

- No tire marks, footprints or other signs of human activity are found near the mutilated carcasses.
- Only the blood and certain parts of the animals — usually the reproductive organs — are removed.
- Trace elements found on and in some carcasses are the same as those collected after a UFO sighting in New Mexico.
- Buzzards and coyotes refuse to eat the mutilated horses and cattle.

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"To date, the mutilations have been as mysterious as they've been grisly," he said.

"The Justice Department authorized the FBI office in Albuquerque to become involved in the investigation of these crimes on the basis that several of the mutilation killings occurred on Indian lands."

Many attacks have occurred on animals at the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in Dulce, N. Mex.

"Any place we've had a mutilation, we have also had UFO sightings," reported Gabe Valdez, a veteran New Mexico state trooper who has investigated more than 30 attacks.

If predators are involved, he said, "we have some predators with super powers. We find these carcasses are being lifted up (off the ground) and later they have clamp marks on the legs. It is also very hard for me to believe that a predator can take the heart out of an animal through a small wound in the neck."

Dr. Henry Monteith, an engineering physicist at Sandia Laboratories which handles secret government projects, revealed that Indians are so terrified by the mutilations, they bury the carcasses immediately and are reluctant to discuss what happened. Even their dogs refuse to go near the carcasses.

Dr. Monteith, who has been investigating the attacks since they began, said Indians have told him of actually seeing spaceships land and unload "star people" who chase down animals and take them back in the spaceship.

"There have been thousands of these mutilations nobody knows about. The Indians are usually frightened to death," he said.

"They don't say anything about it because they know it's being done by 'star people,' they

BAFFLING incidents have occurred in 16 states.

EXPERTS, New Mexico state trooper Gabe Valdez (left) and Dr. Henry Monteith, examine tissue samples from a mutilated cow found at Dulce, N. Mex. Assisting him is retired scientist Norman Schmitt, who's investigated dozens of cases, including those in Valdez's area.

know why they're doing it, so [illegible] are afraid. [illegible] them.

"There are their guide-words [illegible]. The 'star people' know what they're doing and depend on [illegible]."

Dr. Monteith said he had no doubt that aliens from outer space are responsible for the attacks and are using the animals' bodies as part of their study of life on earth.

Many other investigators — police, scientists and UFO researchers — agree that UFOs are the only possible explanation.

Said Richard Stiglamuck, a Boulder, Colo., psychologist and UFO researcher: "What [illegible] are responsible for the mutilations suggest that we are dealing with [illegible] capable of [illegible] entities. ... We have [illegible], to the hypothesis that unidentified aircraft are the means — UFOs.

To aid in solving the mystery, District Attorney Rick Martinez of Espanola, N. Mex., is seeking a $50,000 grant from the U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Adopting UFOs as a possibility, he said,

"I might be the first district attorney in the country to prosecute an alien from outer space."

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
ENCLOSURE COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: ANIMAL / CATTLE MUTILATION

FILE: 198-1048

SECTION 1 OF 1

THIS SECTION IS COMPRISED OF 96 PAGES WHICH WERE REVIEWED FOR THIS RELEASE.

96 PAGES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS SECTION FOR RELEASE.

THIS IS ENCLOSURE _____ OF _____ ENCLOSURE(S)

NO DUPLICATION FEE
FOR THIS PAGE

Airtel

3/12/79

To: SAC, Albuquerque

1 - J. E. Smith

From: Director, FBI

THE MUTILATIONS OF
15 ANIMALS;
CIR
OO: Albuquerque

Re Bureau airtel to Albuquerque, 3/6/79.

Enclosed for the Albuquerque Division is a package containing numerous documents from the Department of Justice concerning captioned matter. It is forwarded for the information of the Albuquerque Division.

Enclosure

ST-140

MAILED 1
MAR 12 1979
FBI

V-32

REC-50

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N 198-1048-1

1 ENCLOSURE
ENC. BEHIND FILE

MAR 13 1979

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APR 24 1979

53 APR 16 1979

OFFICE OF
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

1/8

Judge -
Here's the
Schmidt
letter you
asked for.
Ray Cabrera

3/9/10
Received from DOJ
Pages 1 and 2
FBI S. Adjudicant
file
D.T

auth. by: SAC, AQ
Jessica 3/12/79

[redacted]

January 10, 1979

Honorable Harrison H. Schmitt
United States Senate
1251 DSOB
Washington, D.C. 25010

Dear Senator Schmitt:

As I told you over the telephone yesterday, I have asked Philip Heymann, head of the Criminal Division, to look into our jurisdiction over the cattle mutilation problem with which you are concerned. We will be in touch with you at an early date.

I must say that the materials sent me indicate the existence of one of the strangest phenomenons in my memory.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

Griffin B. Bell

GBB:kmm

bcc: w/materials to Terry Adamson
Ray Calamaro
Phil Heymann - Please have someone look into this matter at an early date. Sen. Schmitt is our friend and there have been about 60 mutilations in New Mexico in recent months. GBB

HARRISON SCHMITT
NEW MEXICO

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

December 21, 1978

RECEIVED
DEC 2
O.L.A.

The Honorable Griffin B. Bell
Attorney General
Department of Justice
10th and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

During the past several years, ranchers throughout the West including my home state of New Mexico, have been victimized by a series of cattle mutilations. As a result, these ranchers have as a group and individually suffered serious economic losses.

These mysterious killings have been the subject of at least two articles in national publications, copies of which are enclosed. Mr. Cockburn's article in the December 1975 issue of Esquire states that there had been a federal investigation into this matter, but it was dropped. Mr. Cockburn implies the investigation may have been terminated because cattle mutilation per se is not a federal offense.

While an individual cattle mutilation may not be a federal offense, I am very concerned at what appears to be a continued pattern of an organized interstate criminal activity. Therefore, I am requesting that the Justice Department re-examine its jurisdiction in this area with respect to the possible reopening of this investigation.

Enclosed are copies of my files on this subject. While awaiting what will hopefully be a favorable reply, I shall continue to gather materials that could be of help in such an investigation. If you need further information in studying this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Harrison Schmitt

HS:jri
Enclosures

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
23 DEC 23 1978
R.A.O.
CRIMINAL-GEN. CRIMES SEC.

NEW MEXICO STATE POLICE DEPARTMENT

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

SUBJECT CORRESPONDENCE - SENATOR SCHMITT (LIVESTOCK MUTILATIONS)

DATE JULY 18, 1978

FROM MARTIN E. VIGIL, DIRECTOR

TO CAPTAIN CHARLIE P. ANAYA
New Mexico State Police
Espanola, New Mexico

ATTENTION OF MAJOR M. S. CHAVEZ

JUL 22 3 34 PM

Dear Captain:

We are in receipt of correspondence from the Honorable Harrison Schmitt, State Senator, and Mr. Manuel S. Gomez, Dulce, New Mexico regarding livestock mutilations in Rio Arriba County for the past two years.

Kindly instruct Officer Gabe Valdez to submit copies of all his reports concerning this matter to this office, in order that we may forward them to Senator Schmitt's office.

Very truly yours,

MARTIN E. VIGIL, DIRECTOR

BY: W. J. Bullock

W. J. BULLOCK, CHIEF
Uniformed Bureau
State Police Division
Criminal Justice Department

cc: File
The Honorable Harrison Schmitt, State Senator

MEV/WJB/cl

ATTACHMENTS:

ENCLOSURE FOR LETTER DATED AUGUST 16, 1978, TO MR. MANUEL S. GOMEZ

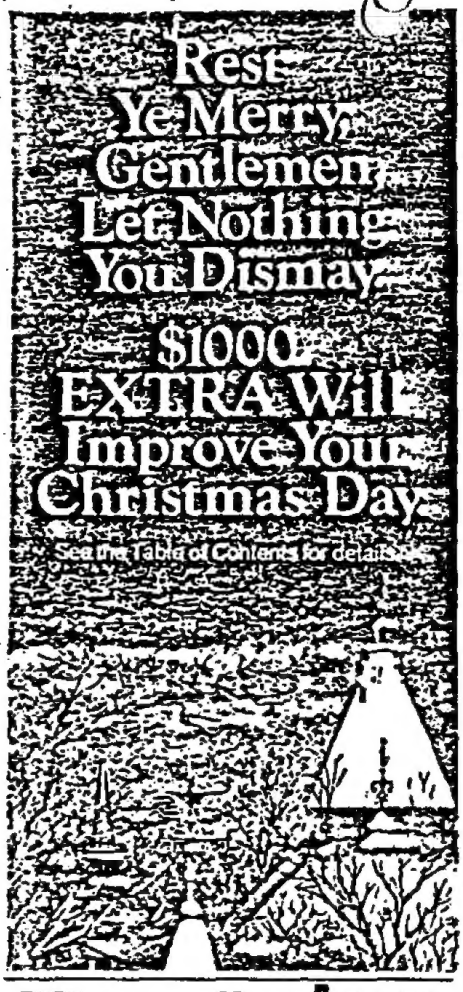
42

United States Department of Justice
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

January 3, 1978

TO: Criminal Division

On December 29, 1978, John Ryan, Schmitt's administrative assistant, called OLA regarding the status of this matter. OLA only received this correspondence yesterday but we have learned that the Senator has personally discussed this matter with the Attorney General. The AG agreed to have someone in the Criminal Division look into this matter to determine whether or not there is any statutory basis for federal intervention.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Crime

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Rippers of the range

As so often happens with crime, it's a question of viewpoint, really. Given the rate of human slaughter in any large American city, it might not seem too important that between April and September of this year 129 cattle were mutilated in the state of Colorado. As a matter of fact, in 1974, there were about 3,750,000 cattle grazing in Colorado and around 37,000 of these died of natural causes, so we are not talking about an event of prime importance to the ranching business.

But no rancher in Colorado is taking this comfortable view of the matter. What the ranchers dislike is the idea of driving across their pastures and finding, as one did last August, a dead bull with its penis, rectum, testicles, tongue and an eye excised with surgical deftness and absolutely no trace visible of the surgeon or surgeons involved.

Over the past couple of years, hundreds of such mutilations have occurred in Colorado, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico and Texas. In fact, if you follow this kind of thing, you may have noticed the odd item in the newspapers about the cattle-cutting craze. I'd seen such items myself but not taken too much of an interest till my good friend Ed Sanders told me last fall that some anonymous person in Sacramento had sent him a cow's tongue in the mail. Now, Sanders is the author of *The Family*, a fine and eerie book about the Manson group. Like myself, he had taken only a passing interest in cattle mutilations. The arrival in June of what he likes to call the *lingua bovina excisa*, packed in a shoe box, at the office of his literary agent escalated his attention remarkably. In June, you may remember, Sacramento was rendered the more colorful by two young Mansonian ladies called Squeaky Fromme and Sandra Good strolling about in their red robes.

Back in 1970, when Sanders was compiling material about the Manson group, ritual murders, and other diverting practices in California, he'd examined the case of a ritual decapitation of a goat in Topanga Canyon. Five years later the question seemed to be whether excised animal parts had, so to speak, become part of the currency of satanic groups; whether a sliced cow's tongue was now an essential part of the ritualist's working equipment.

So far, after some investigation, Sanders has found nothing to connect the tongue from Sacramento with the mutilations in the Midwest. But he did, in the course of a drive across the country, find himself standing in the office of the sheriff of Elbert County, Colorado, looking at a Polaroid photograph. It showed a cow with its udder bag and rectum removed. The cow had been pregnant and the photograph also showed a

long, thin, unborn calf's neck and head, which the mutilators had cut and pulled out of its mother's uterus. The calf's tongue had been cut out. As Sanders later remarked to me, he could understand why the ranchers were getting upset.

The mutilation case histories make for depressing reading. In Minnesota, in the fall of 1974, a young cow was found dead with its sexual organs, one ear and the udder removed. The incision to remove the udder was made in the form of a diamond. The previous spring, the mutilation mob had turned up in Nebraska. Among its victims, a calf with its sex organs removed and its body drained of blood. On we go to Oklahoma to find reports of a Hereford cow killed by strangulation or a blow on the neck.

and with the tip of its nose, its tongue, left ear, udder and vagina all removed with a knife. And on and on, from Texas to Colorado to Montana. Behind them the mutilators always leave county sheriffs and veterinarians saying they have never seen anything like it before, and local authorities on black ritual discoursing on the importance of always using fresh warm blood, if drinking the stuff is called for.

A survey of newsclips and other literature on cattle mutilation seems to indicate that the whole business started with the mysterious death of Snippy. Snippy was a horse whose mutilated body was found on a ranch near Alamosa, Colorado, eight years ago. Snippy's throat had been cut and flesh from the head and neck removed. Also removed were Snippy's brain and stomach. Snippy's owner was convinced that his horse had been "zapped by a flying saucer." Snippy's bones may still be viewed in the museum at Adams State College in Alamosa.

U.F.O.'s are still being blamed for the cattle mutilations. Some students of the craze simply see no other explanation. Carl Whiteside, of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, evidently felt it necessary to contest this hypothesis, since he told me seriously, "We do not feel these people have any magical quality that puts them in the realm of the supernatural or some alien planet civilization."

The occupants of U.F.O.'s have not so far appeared to refute slanderous allegations about their attitude toward terrestrial livestock. People associated with occult groups, on the other hand, have been vehemently trying to distance themselves from the unknown slicers. Back at the start of the year, after twenty-three mutilations in Texas, a self-professed witch in Dallas told a local reporter she thought they were the work of "a satanist group from Fort Worth." These Texas cattle had been drained of their blood, which the witch thought was consonant with satanic addiction to blood. "They give witchcraft a bad name," she added.

A writer in *Gnostica* was even more alarmed. "Despite the obvious illogicality of it," said Isaac Bonewits, a former member of the Church of Satan, "the favorite theory right now among state and federal investigators is that occultists of some sort are involved. This of course is sheer scapegoating, since only a rank amateur would believe it possible to get usable psychic energy out of such mutilations, and a rank amateur would not be able to (a) levitate so as to leave no footprints or draw without leaving evidence of a pumping machine, (c) make the neat 'surgical' incisions that were used to remove organs and extremities, or (d) teleport so as to be able to perform two such operations on the same night, hundreds of miles apart."

It would be interesting to know what Bonewits would consider the talents of a professional; but he was right in thinking that at one point federal and state investigators did think that occultists were involved. For a time, indeed, they thought a solution to the great mutilation wave was at hand.

Early in 1974, a student at Kilgore Junior College in Texas wrote a paper on "The Sons of Satan," which contained detailed descriptions of how this group would mutilate cattle between midnight and sunrise. The ritual would be completed just as sunlight started to filter down on the animal through the branches of a tree. (In the absence of trees, the adepts would hold a branch over the beast and proceed as usual with this substitute.)

The teacher at Kilgore Junior College was sufficiently revolted by the theme's details to destroy it forthwith. The student said he had heard the story from a friend familiar with the satanists. An English professor from Pennsylvania told John Makeig of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* that he was familiar with the Sons of Satan group, had some of its members in his class, and had seen "some girls who'd cut off their fingers and pieces of their ears and things like that." Their "primary thrill," he added, was to eat their own flesh.

All this information was passed on to Don Flickinger, an Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent in Minneapolis. Early this year Flickinger became the main federal investigator of the mutilation phenomenon, for somewhat bizarre reasons. Cattle mutilation is not, as a spokesman in the Justice Department stiffly informed me, a federal offense. Flickinger became involved because three prisoners in federal institutions suddenly wrote to various authorities announcing that not only did they know the satanic cult practicing the mutilations, but that this same group had compiled a "death list" of intended assassination victims. Among the alleged targets were Senator Hubert Humphrey and a federal judge in Minneapolis.

The U.S. attorney in Minneapolis, Robert Renner, put A.T.F.'s Flickinger on the case because, as he put it to me, "We thought it was the only agency freewheeling enough really to do something." The informants continued to pour out their stories: a small city near the Gulf Coast would have its water deliberately poisoned; two people in another Texas town would suffer dismemberment in the near future. Just enough of the informants' stories checked out to cause Flickinger and investigators in several states to continue the hunt for the allegedly four-hundred-strong band of rich cattle-mutilating satanists. Reputed leaders of the group in Texas were polygraphed. All survived such examinations. One of the claims was that the group was escalating from animal to human mutilations and police earnestly scanned all cases of ritualistic murders that occurred. Flickinger himself was threatened and his door daubed with blood.

Sometime in the summer of this year the federal investigation came to an abrupt end. All that a person in the Justice Department associated with the case would tell me was, "We were looking into alleged threats to elected officials from the same type of people involved in cattle mutilations and we were unable to come up with anything at all." This was not particularly illuminating, but John

---

WIDOW PRICE

Oscar Price died with a hunk of steak in his throat,
dining among friends at Top of 21, a restaurant
for people on top of it all. His friends thought
him laughing, then mildly miffed, red-faced
at his wife, who salted her potato and missed his going.

Where she lives now (on top of a hill),
she wonders about choking. This is on days
when rocks shift place and daisies are spineless
with west wind at their backs. She watches birds,
how flycatchers take food and are gone.
It is frightening: all this shifting and bending
and flying. The thing about choking, too.
She misses Oscar, she says.

Makeig at the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* had also been receiving letters from two of the informants—convicted armed robbers in the Marion federal prison—and was able to conclude that the federal investigators had become convinced that the informants were putting out a lot of bogus information in an attempt to get moved to prisons from which it would be easier for them to escape. This view was strengthened by the fact that all three informants had indeed made escape attempts.

Thus ended federal involvement in the investigation of cattle mutilations and thus also ended the last convincing series of leads anyone has yet come up with.

What are we left with? In the hundreds of cases of cattle mutilations, no one has ever been seen at or near the scene of the crime. No trace of the perpetrators—footprints, car tracks or even evidence of the use of helicopters—has ever been detected. Many ranchers believe that helicopters have been used, partly because a large number of sightings of unidentified helicopters have been reported, partly because it seems this is the only form of transport allowing easy access to remote rangeland. Some investigators believe that such furtive use of helicopters would explain the large number of U.F.O. sightings in the affected states.

Cynics say that small predators are responsible for many of the alleged mutilations. This may sometimes be the case, but Carl Whiteside, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation officer, told me that out of all the dead animals sent to the veterinary school at Colorado State University six were fresh enough to be amenable to autopsy. One had been the victim of a predator, five had definitely been mutilated by humans. In all cases, he added, the animals had died of natural causes and the mutilations had occurred post-mortem, which he said produced curious questions: "Are the cattle being killed and mutilated by the same people, or do the mutilators come upon them and do the cutting?"

Out of all the investigations only one clue has emerged. In the late summer a Colorado rancher found a blue plastic valise on his land. In it were a cow's tongue, an ear and a scalpel.

The day I spoke with Whiteside he had just returned from a meeting of three hundred ranchers in Kiowa, Elbert County. Elbert County suffered sixty-three cases of mutilation over the summer. Whiteside said the ranchers "were literally up in arms.... The thing that' and frightening to them is body can get onto their r actually cut up an animal no trace. What we're afraid we are going to have a ho our hands. A person runs o wanders onto a ranch and thing you know these peopl spooked become involved i der."

So be careful about road s time you drive around the states. Ed Sanders, who is a an, told me that one of the driving around mutilation was seeing trucks trundling to orthodox slaughter. You steak for a lifetime and stil tated over the fate of on whose organs have been slice unknown cow molesters. It's ironic tension between homi tistics versus humdrum deat roads. As I said at the sta question of viewpoint. Crim what you care to see.

And how to solve the ca jolly A.T.F. official told me swer is "to get two guys dr as a bull with specially large stand them on the range a It could work, I suppose, but see that the investigators ar desperate. ##

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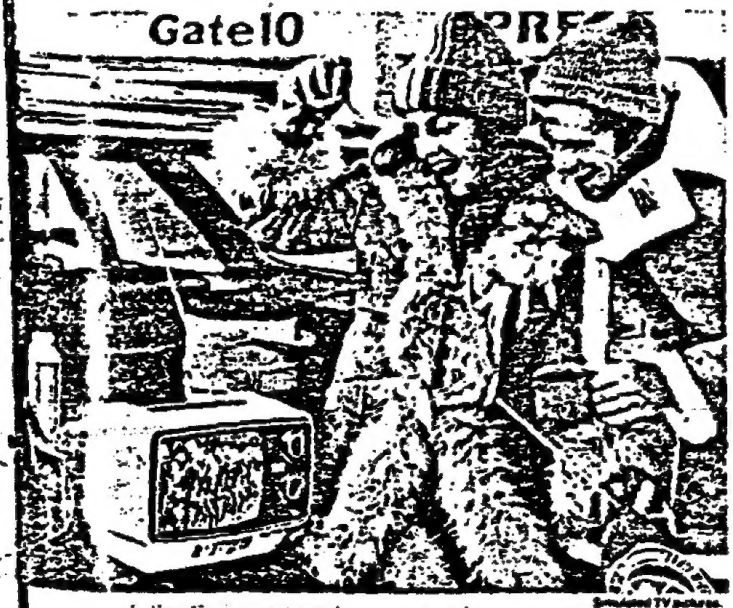
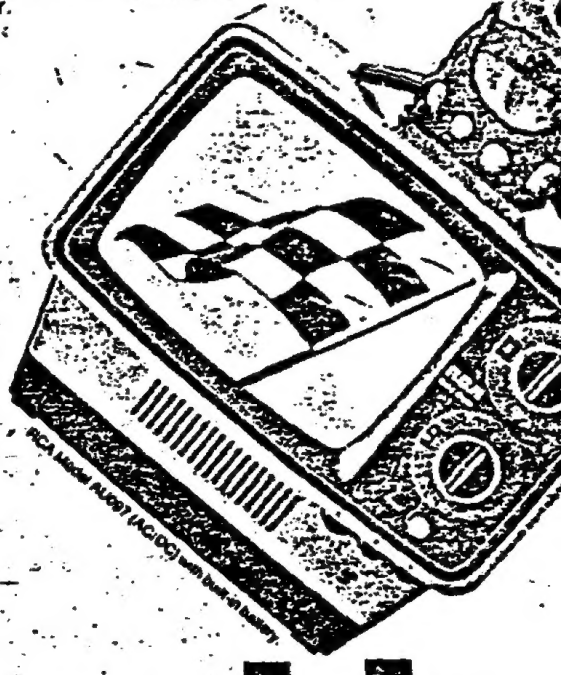




The Sportables

most of them adopted a wait-and-see attitude. And some of the Stateside fugitives had grown downright paranoid after years on the lam. "How do I know they won't lock me up and put me back in the Army?" asked a diehard deserter in New York.

When the Clemency Board—headed by an outspoken critic of the war, former New York Sen. Charles Goodell—begins its work, some of the resisters' fears may be eased. Goodell's dovish views will be bolstered by those of other board members, including National Urban League director Vernon E. Jordan and the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame and a former head of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

The panelists clearly have some very difficult problems ahead—weighing, for example, time served in jail against time owed for alternate service, or battle honors against time spent AWOL. And the board contained some hawkish members who might oppose leniency, including retired Marine Corps. Gen. Lewis Walt and James Maye, executive director of Paralyzed Veterans of America. Still, the Ford plan had the virtue of all compromises. Said Hesburgh: "As long as Nixon was in, these guys could rot as far as he was concerned. It's the difference between no chance and some chance."

INDIANS:

Blazing Saddles

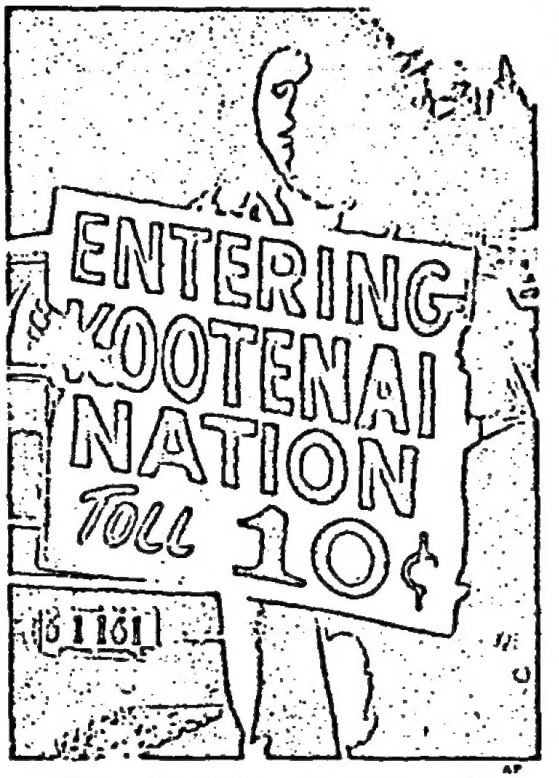
It didn't look like much of a border crossing. The sign by the side of the road merely demanded a 10-cent toll from passing motorists, most of whom didn't even stop. But the militant Kootenai Indians manning the roadside picket lines outside Bonners Ferry, Idaho, weren't kidding. After years of frustration trying to deal with Washington, the 67 members of the Kootenai tribe finally lost patience last week and declared war on the United States—by registered mail.

Their challenge was delivered in a letter to President Ford demanding a 128,000-acre reservation, plus as much as $3.2 million for tribal land the government had paid for in 1962 at the rate of 36 cents an acre. To back it up, they threatened to tax white homeowners and businesses squatting on their ancient tribal lands. Idaho's Gov. Cecil Andrus sent in 60 lawmen to keep the highways clear, but tensions soon eased. The Bureau of Indian Affairs invited tribal leaders to begin negotiations, and the citizens of Bonners Ferry relaxed. "The Indians have told us that they don't want a war," said one sympathetic local. "They know it's tough for 67 people to get a reaction from Washington, D.C."

MYSTERIES:

The Midnight Marauder

Each day, just before dusk, ranchers and farmhands pile into pickup trucks and fan out across the rolling prairie of northeastern Nebraska. They park mostly on ridges or hilltops, where they can scan the pastures and the narrow roads that wind through them. With rifles and shotguns leaning against their trucks, the men watch nervously, smoking cigarettes and talking with each other over a network of citizen's-band radios. Some of the men will stand guard all night, yet none of them really knows what he is looking for. "I've never seen anything like this," says State. Sen. Jules Burbach, who has represented Knox County for eighteen years. "Folks are almost hysterical."



'Warpath': Tribesman soliciting tolls

Since last May, more than 100 cattle have been found dead and gruesomely mutilated in Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa. On John Sunderman's farm outside Madison, Neb., a cow was killed with a blunt instrument last June and her udder and sexual organs were cut off. When a veterinarian examined the corpse, he found that all of the animal's blood had been drained. On the nearby ranch of Vern Stringfield, a month-old bull calf was clubbed to death. Its blood was drained off, too, and someone cut a hole in the calf's side, removing the intestines and coiling them neatly next to the head.

Rumor and anxiety have produced a host of unproved theories to explain the bizarre events. Many people, noting that some of the victims were black, suggest that devotees of witchcraft may have done the foul deeds. "It could be someone setting up a fertility cult of some kind," says Richard Thill, a German-studies professor at the University of Nebraska who teaches noncredit witchcraft courses, "or it could be someone putting you on. If they are putting you on, they are pretty sick." A few residents report sighting strange creatures resembling bears and gorillas, and at least one farmer claims that a shiny UFO landed in a field where a slaughtered animal was later found.

Rustlers: Still others think the killings may be the work of marijuana smugglers, who supposedly use searchlight-equipped helicopters to harvest the wild stands of pot known to grow in Nebraska. A helicopter often has been seen hovering over the range around the time of a mutilation, and some ranchers swear they have been chased down lonely roads by choppers. Helicopters are also said to have been used in cattle rustling, and some stockmen think the rustlers may be collecting blood and organs as lures for cattle grazing on the open range this fall.

As the tension mounted, law-enforcement officials held statewide conferences to sift the accounts and to calm the rifle-toting cattlemen. They organized a posse for a fruitless search of the area. The plot thickened when autopsies were conducted on some of the dead animals. The doctors reported that most of the animals had died of natural causes, such as bacterial infections and kidney disease, or from swallowing oil that had been dropped on the range. Afterward, the medical reports concluded, the carcasses were chewed by predator coyotes, wolves, buzzards, eagles or even magpies.

Cuts: The explanation doesn't suit everyone. "Why didn't we notice this sort of thing in other years?" asks one skeptic. "The predators are not wolves," insists Senator Burbach. "They are a semidomesticated, two-legged animal called man." Noting that many of the cuts seemed to have been done with a blade, Gorden Gruber, an organizer of the patrols, remarked: "I've yet to see a coyote who can chew a straight edge."

Some officials are beginning to worry that the real danger is not some ghostly butcher, but the keyed-up vigilantes themselves. After two slugs pierced the canopy of a utility-company helicopter checking power lines, the Nebraska National Guard ordered its helicopter pilots to cruise cross-country at higher altitudes than usual—generally 2,000 feet instead of 1,000—to avoid being fired upon by frightened ranch hands. "I would hate to think what would happen," a Guard spokesman told NEWSWEEK's William Schmidt, "if one of our pilots was forced to put down a disabled chopper in a pasture at night. Someone might get killed."